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3 May 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: George Bush Travel to China

1. On 2 May George Bush phoned me from Houston and said he had received a letter dated 15 April from Huang Chen referring to Bush's letter of 1 March.

2. In his letter Huang Chen said the Chinese welcomed Bush to China, that his trip was formally approved and that he would be the guest of the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs which would cover costs. The trip would be for three weeks in late September 1977 and for about ten persons of Bush's choosing. Bush could send them the list when he made up his mind. Bush and the Chinese side could consult later on the itinerary. Bush could also include two-three press people. The press people should write directly to Peking.

3. Bush said he had included my name as a travelling companion to the Chinese in his 1 March letter. He now intended to write the Chinese and include me on the list of people he wanted to take to China with him. (I had discussed my travel to China with Bush earlier with both DDO and with D/DCI/NI.) Based on this discussion I told Bush to "go ahead and include my name." Bush expressed some concern about press play which might result from my accompanying his group, not as it would affect him but what the Chinese reaction and U.S. press reaction might be. I told Bush that if the Chinese approved my coming, they would be prepared to live with any reaction. The real problem was with the U.S. press here in Washington. He then seemed less concerned about the whole thing.

4. He asked me to keep this quiet because he didn't want it leaking out before he announced it himself. I agreed. I have only informed Mike Oksenberg of the NSC who said as far as he was concerned I should definitely go with Bush.

[Redacted]
James R. Lilley

National Intelligence Officer
for China

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